

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1 1. A method for supporting an epicardium, said method comprising:
2 introducing an at least one generally linear flexible element into a
3 pericardial space through an access point so that the element assume a configuration which
4 encircles the heart as the element is introduced.
- 1 2. A method as in claim 1, wherein the flexible element assumes a
2 helical configuration encircling the heart as the element is introduced.
- 1 3. A method as in claim 1 or 2, wherein the flexible element is
2 introduced through an access point below an xiphoid process through a pericardium wall
3 into the pericardial space.
- 1 4. A method as in claim 3, further comprising the steps of puncturing
2 skin beneath the xiphoid process with a needle and passing the needle and a guidewire
3 through the pericardium into the pericardial space.
- 1 5. A method as in claim 4 further comprising the steps of withdrawing
2 the needle and introducing an introducer over the guidewire through the pericardium into
3 the pericardial space.
- 1 6. A method as in claim 5 further comprising the step passing a
2 delivery catheter through the introducer over the guidewire through the pericardium into
3 the pericardial space to a site adjacent an epicardium.
- 1 7. A method as in claim 6 further comprising the subsequent step of
2 introducing the passive support through the delivery catheter to the epicardium.
- 1 8. A method as in claim 3, wherein the at least one flexible member
2 comprises a ribbon-like member.
- 1 9. A method as in claim 8, wherein the at least one ribbon-like
2 member has a width-thickness ratio greater than about two.
- 1 10. A method as in claim 9, wherein the at least one ribbon-like
2 member has a width-thickness ratio greater than about seven.

- 1 11. A method as in claim 8, wherein the at least one ribbon-like
2 member has a length and varies in flexibility along that length.
- 1 12. A method as in claim 8, wherein the at least one ribbon-like
2 member has a length and varies in width along that length.
- 1 13. A method as in claim 8, wherein the at least one ribbon-like
2 member has a length and varies in thickness along that length.
- 1 14. A method as in claim 8, wherein the at least one ribbon-like
2 member is at least partially inflatable.
- 1 15. A method as in claim 14, wherein the at least one ribbon-like
2 member is incrementally inflatable.
- 1 16. A method as in claim 8, comprising introducing multiple ribbon-
2 like members.
- 1 17. A method as in claim 8, wherein the at least one ribbon-like
2 member has a lumen extending from the proximal end at least partially to the distal end.
- 1 18. A method as in claim 8, wherein the at least one ribbon-like
2 member includes at least one orifice situated to open to other surfaces of the generally
3 helical member when the support is helically configured.
- 1 19. A method as in claim 8, wherein the at least one ribbon-like
2 member further comprising a source of glue or adhesive flowable through the at least one
3 orifice, the glue or adhesive suitable for causing adherence only between portions of the
4 generally helical member.
- 1 20. A method as in claim 19, wherein the glue or adhesive comprises a
2 modified cyanoacrylate.